

**James Madison to Edmund Randolph, August 13, 1782.  
Partly in Cipher. Transcription: The Writings of James  
Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's  
Sons, 1900-1910.**

**TO EDMUND RANDOLPH.<sup>1</sup>**

1 From the Madison Papers (1840).

Philadelphia, August 13, 1782.

Dear Sir, —I transmitted to you, a few days ago, by express, the contents of a letter from General Carleton and Admiral Digby to General Washington, announcing the purpose of the British Court to acknowledge the independence of the Thirteen Provinces. Our expected advices on this head from Europe are not yet arrived. A Mr. Blake, an opulent citizen of South Carolina, who came from Great Britain under a passport from Mr. Laurens to New York, and thence hither, assures us that the Administration are serious with respect to peace and the independence of this country; that the point, however, was carried in the Cabinet by a majority of two voices only; that their finances are so disordered that a continuance of the war is in a manner impracticable; that the militia at New York have been thanked for their past services, and told explicitly that they would not be wanted in future; that the evacuation of the United States will certainly take place this fall, and that a large number of transports are coming from England to remove the British garrisons, probably to the West Indies; that these transports will contain about two thousand five hundred Germans, who, it is supposed, in case of such an evacuation, will have the same destination; that Carleton told him, and desired him to mention it at large, that he was a real friend to America, and wished her to be powerful, rich, united, and happy, and secure

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against all her enemies; that he also intimated, in the course of conversation, that Canada would probably be given up as a fourteenth member of the Confederacy. You will draw such conclusions from these particulars as you think fit. The gentlemen of South Carolina vouch for the veracity of Mr. Blake. It appears to me much more clear that the Ministry really mean to subscribe to our

independence, than that they have renounced the hope of seducing us from the French connection.

The motion for revoking the power given to France has been made again, and pushed with the expected earnestness, but was parried, and will issue, I believe, in an adoption of your report with a representation thereupon to the Court of France.

Among other means of revenue, the back lands have on several late occasions been referred to, and at length recommended by a Grand Committee to the consideration of Congress. A motion for assigning a day to take up the report was negatived by a small majority. The report has been repeated by the committee, but a second experiment has not been made in Congress. Several of the Middle States seem to be facing about. Maryland, however, preserves its wonted jealousy and obstinacy.

In compiling the evidence of our title, I suppose you will, of course, be furnished with all Mr. Jefferson's lights. I have lately seen a fact stated by him, which shows clearly the ideas entertained by Virginia with respect to her territorial limits subsequent to the resumption of the charter. In a convention between commissioners on the part of the Commonwealth of England, and of the Grand Assembly of Virginia in 1651, by which the latter submit to the new government, it is stipulated that Virginia shall enjoy the ancient bounds and limits granted by the charters of the former Kings, and that a new charter shall be issued from the Parliament against any that shall have entrenched upon the rights thereof